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INFO RUCNAFG/AFGHANISTAN COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L KABUL 000377

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/16/2019

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [AF](#)

SUBJECT: FM SPANTA ON HOLBROOKE VISIT, KARZAI INTERVIEWS,  
AND PRESIDENTIAL TELEPHONE CALL

Classified By: Ambassador William B. Wood for reasons 1.4(b) and (d)

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: FM Spanta told the Ambassador on 2/17 that the visit of Ambassador Holbrooke led to renewed Afghan commitment to combating threats to the bilateral relationship. He also stressed that recently released press interviews with President Karzai predated the recent agreement to keep public statements friendly. Finally, Spanta welcomed the upcoming telephone call between Presidents Obama and Karzai. Spanta and Amb. Wood also discussed various issues related to presidential politics which will be reported septel.

HOLBROOKE VISIT A SUCCESS  
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¶2. (C) Spanta characterized the 2/12-15 visit by Amb. Holbrooke as successful. After the meetings with Amb. Holbrooke, he instructed MFA staff to work to eliminate threats to the bilateral relationship. The MFA believed as the U.S. did in the importance of the relationship, and the commitment necessary to promote it.

DATED INTERVIEWS WITH PRESIDENT KARZAI CAUSING  
MISPERCEPTIONS  
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¶3. (C) Spanta stressed that recent press interviews with President Karzai predated the agreement during the Holbrooke visit that both sides will keep public statements positive. Spanta suggested that the late release of these interviews was a purposeful act by people within the government, close to President Karzai, who wish to damage the bilateral relationship. The Ambassador assured Spanta that the Embassy would inform Washington on the timing of these interviews.

LOOKING FORWARD TO PRESIDENTIAL TELEPHONE CALL  
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¶4. (C) The Ambassador informed Spanta that schedulers for both sides were arranging a telephone call between Presidents Obama and Karzai. The call would occur soon. Spanta welcomed the call.  
WOOD